



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Bow Lake Elementary School

School district: Highline

School location: SeaTac

Began participating in the Green Schools Program: June 2009

Level One of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in May 2010

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Bow Lake expanded its recycling rate from 33% to 39%.
- Two student Green Teams were formed to support Bow Lake's waste reduction and conservation goals. Green Team efforts include weekly monitoring of classroom recycling containers, providing paper reuse bins in all classrooms and work rooms, and collecting used paper bags for the Des Moines Food Bank.
- Student representatives from almost every classroom monitored lunchroom recycling bins.
- All recycling bins were labeled with stickers from the Green Schools Program showing what materials can and can't be recycled.
- The school began the 2009-10 year with a school-wide assembly and classroom workshops provided by King County.
- Portions of two staff meetings were devoted to recycling and waste reduction topics.
- Staff created a public service announcement video to teach students and staff how to recycle in classrooms and the lunchroom.
- The school recycled twenty 32-gallon bags of milk cartons every week.
- Bow Lake participated in the Great Paper Challenge, a school-wide contest to reduce paper use by printing less often, printing double-sided copies, and using the back sides of paper. To announce the challenge, the school created a banner by stringing together used paper with printing on both sides.
- Students helped to eliminate unwanted mail for teachers by sending handwritten requests to be removed from mailing lists, and the school switched from paper memos to email.



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Other conservation activities

- The student Green Team conducted a weekly litter patrol on the school's campus.
- For each classroom, work room, and common space in the school, the student Green Team developed a checklist of waste reduction, recycling, and energy conservation reminders.
- Bow Lake placed stickers provided by the Green Schools Program on all classroom light switches to remind the staff and students to turn off lights when rooms were not in use. Instead of overhead lights, several classrooms used sunlight or small lamps with compact fluorescent bulbs.

Comments

"Understanding our impact on the environment has been the driving force. We are a large school, and would like to make our impact a positive one. If we are educating children and staff to conserve resources, they will in turn teach their own families and our community. Rethinking the way we consume has been very powerful for us. Use less, and you end up needing less!" – **Sallyanne Hendren, teacher**